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IBM Corporation Dept. IQ0A/B1g.40-3 1701 North Street Endicott, NY 13760			JARRETT, SCOTT L.	
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			3623	

DATE MAILED: 01/11/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/802,459	KOUNO ET AL.	
	Examiner Scott L. Jarrett	Art Unit 3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 March 2004.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1.) Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2.) Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3.) Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to because Figures 4-8 are illegible. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Abstract

2. Applicant is reminded of the proper content of an abstract of the disclosure.

A patent abstract is a concise statement of the technical disclosure of the patent and should include that which is new in the art to which the invention pertains. If the patent is of a basic nature, the entire technical disclosure may be new in the art, and the abstract should be directed to the entire disclosure. If the patent is in the nature of an improvement in an old apparatus, process, product, or composition, the abstract should include the technical disclosure of the improvement. In certain patents, particularly those for compounds and compositions, wherein the process for making and/or the use thereof are not obvious, the abstract should set forth a process for making and/or use thereof. If the new technical disclosure involves modifications or alternatives, the abstract should mention by way of example the preferred modification or alternative.

The abstract should not refer to purported merits or speculative applications of the invention and should not compare the invention with the prior art.

Where applicable, the abstract should include the following:

- (1) if a machine or apparatus, its organization and operation;
- (2) if an article, its method of making;
- (3) if a chemical compound, its identity and use;
- (4) if a mixture, its ingredients;
- (5) if a process, the steps.

Extensive mechanical and design details of apparatus should not be given.

3. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because the abstract does not adequately describe the term CM. Examiner suggests applicant spell out CM. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

5. Claims 1, 2, 5, 13, 15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Regarding Claims 1, 2, 5, 13, 15 and 17 the disclosure fails to state or teach one of ordinary skill in the art the best mode (by hand, computer or like device) for configuring the system or method to calculate the plurality of sales metrics (numbers, ratios, etc.) as claimed. Without this disclosure one skilled in the art would be unable to practice the invention without undue experimentation. Further the disclosure fails to state or teach one of ordinary skill in the art the best mode (by hand, computer or like device) for configuring the system or method to calculate the plurality of sales metrics as claimed.

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding Claims 1-7, claims 1-17 are generally narrative and indefinite, failing to conform with current U.S. practice. They appear to be a literal translation into English from a foreign document and are replete with grammatical and idiomatic errors.

Regarding Claims 1 and 5 the disclosure does not clearly define the phrase "system." A system as claimed could contain a plurality of elements and without further definition of the system elements the phrase as claimed is vague and indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

1. Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth in a two-prong test of:

- (1) whether the invention is within the technological arts; and
- (2) whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must be within the technological arts. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e., abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject matter. For a process claim to pass muster, the recited process must somehow apply, involve, use, or advance the technological arts.

Additionally, for a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the present case, the claimed invention merely calculates a plurality of sales metrics (numbers, values, ratios, indices, etc.) does not produce a tangible result. The claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the technological art as explained above claims 1-17 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Regarding Claims 1-4, claims 1-4 only recite an abstract idea. The recited commodity sales number forecasting system for calculating a forecast sales number of

a commodity at each shop for the commodity sold in a group of shops within a predetermined district does not apply, involve, or use the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. The claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the technological art as explained above claims 1-4 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.

As to technological arts recited in the preamble, mere recitation in the preamble (i.e., intended or field of use) or mere implication of employing a machine or article of manufacture to perform some or all of the recited steps does not confer statutory subject matter to an otherwise abstract idea unless there is positive recitation in the claim as a whole to breathe life and meaning into the preamble. In the present case, none of the recited steps are directed to anything in the technological arts as explained above with the exception of the recitation that the system is a sales number forecasting "system." Looking at the claims as a whole, nothing in the body of the claims recites any structure or functionality to suggest that a computer performs the recited steps. Therefore, the terms discussed are taken to merely recite a field of use and/or nominal recitation of technology.

Regarding Claims 5-8, claims 5-8 only recite an abstract idea. The recited commodity sales number forecasting system does not apply, involve, or use the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. The claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the

technological art as explained above claims 5-8 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.

As to technological arts recited in the preamble, mere recitation in the preamble (i.e., intended or field of use) or mere implication of employing a machine or article of manufacture to perform some or all of the recited steps does not confer statutory subject matter to an otherwise abstract idea unless there is positive recitation in the claim as a whole to breathe life and meaning into the preamble. In the present case, none of the recited steps are directed to anything in the technological arts as explained above with the exception of the recitation that the system is a sales number forecasting "system." Looking at the claims as a whole, nothing in the body of the claims recites any structure or functionality to suggest that a computer performs the recited steps. Therefore, the terms discussed are taken to merely recite a field of use and/or nominal recitation of technology.

Regarding Claims 9-12, claims 9-12 only recite an abstract idea. The recited method for calculating a forecast commodity sales number in each unit district within a predetermined district does not apply, involve, or use the technological arts since all of the recited steps can be performed in the mind of the user or by use of a pencil and paper. The claimed invention, as a whole, is not within the technological art as explained above claims 9-12 are deemed to be directed to non-statutory subject matter.

As to technological arts recited in the preamble, mere recitation in the preamble (i.e., intended or field of use) or mere implication of employing a machine or article of

manufacture to perform some or all of the recited steps does not confer statutory subject matter to an otherwise abstract idea unless there is positive recitation in the claim as a whole to breathe life and meaning into the preamble. In the present case, none of the recited steps are directed to anything in the technological arts as explained above with the exception of the recitation that the method is grouped by a use of a "computer." Looking at the claims as a whole, nothing in the body of the claims recites any structure or functionality to suggest that a computer performs the recited steps. Therefore, the terms discussed are taken to merely recite a field of use and/or nominal recitation of technology.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Singh et al., U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0169657.

Regarding Claim 1 Singh et al. teach a system and method for supply chain demand (sales) forecasting and planning (Abstract). More generally Singh et al. teach a system for predicated future customer demand by enabling the business to understand

customer demand drivers and to utilize the insights gained to unify the supply chain planning process (Paragraph 28, Page 3).

Singh et al. further teach that there exists a plurality of conventional and well-known methods and systems for forecasting demand (Paragraph 009-0012, Pages 1-2; Paragraph 0021, Page 2; Paragraph 48, Page 4, Paragraphs 57-58, Page 6).

Singh et al. further teach that the demand forecasting and planning system further comprises:

- the ability to forecast demand across multiple levels of the supply chain (Paragraph 0002, Page 1) including but not limited to geographical regions (districts) and individual stores (Paragraph 0024, Page 3; Paragraphs 41-42, Page 3; Figure 1);
- the ability to forecast demand for products and products within related markets (Paragraph 0019, Page 2);
- the utilization of a plurality of factors effecting demand including but not limited to: causal factors (promotions, new market/product, competitor actions, etc.), buying trends, time, demand history and seasonal effects (Paragraph 0007, Page 1; Paragraph 0023, Page 2; Paragraph 0035, Page 3; Paragraph 0055, Page 5; Equations 1-4, Page 7; Figures 4A-4C and 5);
- the utilization of a plurality of data sources including but not limited to point of sales, customer orders, returns, etc. (Abstract; Paragraph 0021, Page 2); and
- the ability to utilize a plurality of well-known or proprietary demand forecasting algorithms, techniques, methods, etc. (Paragraph 0021, page 2; Figure 2).

Regarding Claim 2 Singh et al. teach a sales forecasting method and system for predicting demand across a multiple levels of a supply chains as discussed above.

Singh et al. does not expressly teach the specific demand (sales) metrics (parameters, values, numbers, ratios, indices, etc.) that are collected, calculated, monitored or reported on as part of the demand planning and forecasting system.

Official notice is taken that there exists a plurality of widely used and very well-known business metrics (numbers, values, ratios, percentages, etc.) that are collected, calculated, monitored and reported on in order to provide a basis for a plurality of business practices and systems including but not limited to sales forecasting, demand planning, sales commissions determination, cash flow projections, inventory management, market research, retail performance management and the like.

Further official notice is taken that these business metrics include, but are not limited to the following: foot/pedestrian traffic, visitor counts, capture rate, conversion rate, sales volume, dollar value, sales per square foot, same store sales, sales per visitor, visitor stay, traffic density, average sales, number of transactions, transaction volume, customer counts, number of items sold, sales per hour, items per sale, stock to sales ratio, inventory turnover, and a plurality of other business metrics.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have

provided the user with a plurality of well-known business metrics as a means of forecasting and planning demand including but not limited to the metrics as claimed.

Official notice is taken that the use of business metrics to measure and compare the performance of products, regions, stores, etc. is old and very well-known in the art and that the calculation of sales forecast ratios and sales forecasts number provide a well-known and convenient means for performance management.

For example one could readily determine the contribution of a region/store to a product's overall sales by taking the number of items of a particular product sold by a store divided by the total number of items of a particular product sold by a region (ratio/percentage; district ratio, forecast sales number ratio). Further one could just as easily determine the forecasted sales of a particular product for a specific (forecast sales number) given the total forecasted demand for a particular product and the expected contribution percentage for that region (forecast sales ratio).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have benefited from its ability to analyze and forecast demand data based on a geographic region and/or store location to compare the performance of individual regions and/or stores thereby enabling the business to make management decisions regarding the geographic regions and stores being managed.

Regarding Claim 3 Singh et al. teach a system and method demand forecasting and planning further comprising of the ability to forecast demand for a plurality of products utilizing a plurality of sources of data/information as discussed above. Singh et al. further teaches that demand patterns and therefore in turn the sales forecasts in various industries must take into account such factors as foot traffic and product preferences (Paragraph 0007, Page 1).

Singh et al. does not expressly teach the calculation of the sales metrics as claimed.

Official notice is taken that there exists a plurality of retail performance management systems and methods that utilize a plurality of business metrics such as store traffic, demand rates, etc. as a means for measuring the performance of a store/region/product (calculate sales volume, revenue, capture and conversion rates).

Further official notice is taken that the calculation of capture and conversion rates as a means for measuring the performance of a store is very well-known in the art wherein the conversion rate is a simple calculation using the store traffic (forecast the total number of visitors) and transaction volumes (sales of a commodity) and indicates what percentage/ratio of customers entering the store actually make a purchase (retailer effectiveness) and the capture rate is a simple calculation using foot/pedestrian traffic (passers by) and store traffic and indicates what percentage/ratio of potential customers passing by the store enter the store.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have benefited from forecasting store traffic, capture rate, conversion rate and a plurality of other business metrics as a means for enabling a business to measure the performance of a store/region.

Regarding Claim 4 Singh et al. teach the forecasting of sales metrics based on a plurality of factors including the use of multiple historical data streams/feeds (past achievement) as discussed above.

Regarding Claims 5-7 Singh et al. teach that the demand planning and forecasting system takes into account the affect promotions, local events, holidays and a plurality of other factors have on the demand (sale) of products and can be utilized to forecast demand across multiple levels of the supply chain (store, region, etc.) as discussed above. Singh et al. further teach the forecasting of sales metrics based on a plurality of factors including the use of multiple historical data streams/feeds (past achievement) as discussed above.

Singh et al. does not expressly teach the calculation of the specific business metrics as claimed.

Official notice is taken that a customer's purchasing trend (measure of how likely a particular customer is to buy a specific product/service) and the forecast ratio (sell through rate, purchase rate, forecast index) at a regional or store level are all well-known and widely used metric utilized to forecast the sale of a product.

Further official notice is taken that the forecasted sales (number of items/product sold, forecast sales number) of a product can be calculated from the forecasted number of visitors (customers, foot traffic, customer counting, etc.) to a store/region and the tendency for a visitor to purchase a product (demand rate, conversion rate, purchase rate, sell through rate, forecast ratio, etc.) thereby providing a means for forecasting and planning the demand of a product at any level in the supply chain.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have benefited from forecasting store traffic, conversion rate and a plurality of other business metrics as a means for enabling a business to measure the performance of a store/region.

Regarding Claim 8 Singh et al. teach a demand planning and forecasting system as discussed above.

Singh et al. does not expressly teach the use of average unit price per visitor as claimed.

Official notice is taken that the use of the customer average purchase (price, sale, etc.) is well-known and widely used as a means for business planning and performance management.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have benefited from utilizing the well-known metric of average unit price per customer visit and a plurality of other business metrics as a means for enabling a business to measure the performance of a store/region and determine sales revenues/volumes.

Regarding Claim 9 -12 Singh et al. teach a system and method for demand forecasting and planning across a plurality of levels in the supply chain and accounting for a plurality of demand factors, including but not limited to promotions, as discussed above. Singh et al. further teach the utilization of a plurality of historical data streams/feeds as part of the demand forecasting and planning system as discussed above.

Singh et al. does not expressly teach the calculation of a total forecasted sales number or forecasted sales per customer (forecast ratio).

Official notice is taken that calculation of a total forecasted sales number or forecasted sales per customer (forecast ratio) are old and very well-known in the art.

Further official notice is taken that calculating the total forecasted sales for a region by using the total forecasted sales and the expected contribution of a region/store or customers to the total sales (forecast ratio) is old and well known.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have benefited from utilizing the well-known metrics of total forecasted sales number or forecasted sales per customer and a plurality of other business metrics as a means for enabling a business to measure the performance of a store/region and determine sales revenues/volumes.

Regarding Claims 13, 14 and 16 Singh et al. teach a system and method for demand forecasting and planning across multiple levels of a supply chain utilizing a plurality of demand factors as discussed above. Further Singh et al. teaches that the system utilizes a graphical user interface and Internet (Web) technologies (architectures, platform; Figures 3, 4A-4D; Paragraphs 0101-0103, Pages 10-11).

Singh et al. does not expressly teach the calculation of a forecast ratio or number/value of a product-selling index (forecasted sales per visitor).

Official notice is taken that calculation of a forecast ratio and forecasted sales per customer (forecast ratio) are old and very well-known in the art.

Further official notice is taken that calculating the total forecasted sales for a region by using the total forecasted sales and the expected contribution of a region/store or customers to the total sales (forecast ratio) is old and well known.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention that the demand planning and forecasting system as taught by Singh et al. would have benefited from utilizing the well-known metrics of total forecasted sales number or forecasted sales per customer and a plurality of other business metrics as a means for enabling a business to measure the performance of a store/region and determine sales revenues/volumes.

Regarding Claim 15 Singh et al. teach that the system and method for demand forecasting and planning provides the ability to take into account sales forecasts based on expert opinion (judgment forecasts; Paragraph 44, Page 4) and further enables the user to adjust (override, update) data utilized by the system (Paragraph 0025, page 3).

Regarding Claim 17 Singh et al. teach a system and method for demand forecasting and planning as discussed above. Singh et al. teach that the system can be located at various remote locations (Paragraph 0016, Page 2), that the data utilized as part of the system is received from a plurality of sources (feeds) including but not limited

to stores/regions (Figures 2, 7, 8) as discussed above and that the forecasts can be published (transmitted; Figure 6, Element 604; Paragraph 000, Page 5; Paragraph 0101, Page 10).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Hoffman et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0074206, teach a system and method for calculating a plurality of sales related parameters and the use of those parameters as part of an integrated supply chain.
- Sultan, Juliette, U.S. Patent No. 6,804,657, teaches a system and method for global sales forecasting.
- Landvater, Darryl, U.S. Patent No. 6,609,101, teaches a sales forecasting system that utilizes historical sales values/numbers to forecast replenishment shipments for a retail store.
- Shinozaki, Noboru, U.S. Patent No. 6,578,009, teaches a system for determining a businesses marketing strategy for products/services sold through a plurality of shops. Shinozaki further teaches the use of a plurality of sales related metrics.
- Willemain et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,205,431, teach a system and method for calculating a plurality of sales forecasting values/numbers when demand is uncertain.

- Adno, Hideyuki, U.S. Patent No. 6,032,125, teaches a system and method for calculating a plurality of sales numbers, indices and ratios and the use of historical sales data to generate sales forecasts.

- Garg, Amit, U.S. Patent No. 6,009,407, teaches a system for calculating a plurality of sales forecasting metrics for a plurality of products and the use of those metrics to determine product replenishment needs.

- Lee et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,712,985, teach a system and method for estimating business demand (sales forecast) based on a plurality of business factors/influences.

- Fields et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,459,656, teach a system and method for forecasting business demand (sales).

- Fields et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,299,115, teach a system for calculating a plurality of sales forecast metrics as a means for more efficient product planning in a retail environment.

- Kagami et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,237,496, teach an inventory management system that utilizes sales forecast metrics to determine product inventory needs.

- Kagami et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,128,861, teach an inventory management system that utilizes sales forecast values/numbers and indices to facilitate inventory management.

- Mentzer, John et al., Sales Forecast Management, teach well-known methods, techniques and systems for managing the sales forecasting process.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (703) 306-5679. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00AM - 5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (703) 305-9643. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

SJ
1/6/2004



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